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*Allegorico - Botanico -
Badinical* **PIECE:**

OR, THE
Natural History
OF THE
ARBOR VITÆ:
OR THE
TREE of LIFE.

*Nec minus arboribus succi genitabilis humor
Sufficitur*

BUCH. PSAL. 134.



L O N D O N:

Printed for the Company of GARDENERS, 1732.



THE

Natural History.

OF THE

ARBOR VITÆ, &c.

The DESCRIPTION and PLACE.

THE Tree of Life is a Succulent Plant, consisting of one only strait Stem, on the Top of which is a Pistillum or Apex, tho' at some times Glandiform, and resembling a May-Cherry; tho' at others more like the Nut of the Avelana or Fillbert-Tree.

Its Fruits, contrary to most others, grow near the Root; they are usually no more than two in Number, their Bigness somewhat exceeding that of an ordinary Nutmeg; both contain'd in one strong Siliqua, or Purse, which together with the whole Root of the Plant is commonly thick set with numerous Fibrillæ, or capillary Tendrils.

The Tree is of slow Growth, and requires Time to bring it to Perfection, rarely seeding to any purpose before the fifteenth Year; when the Fruit's coming to good Maturity,

turity, yield a viscous Juice or balmy *Succus*, which being from time to time discharg'd at the *Pistillum*, is mostly bestow'd upon the open *Calix's* of the *Frutex Vulvaria* or *Flowering Shrub*, usually spreading under the Shade of this Tree, and whose Parts are, by a wonderful Mechanism adapted to receive it.

The ingenious Mr. *Richard Bradley* is of Opinion, the *Frutex* is hereby impregnated, and then first begins to bear; he therefore accounts this *Succus* the *Farina Facundans* of the Plant: And the learned *Leonhard Fucksius*, in his *Historia stirpium insigniorum* observes the greatest Sympathy between this Tree and Shrub; they are, says he, of the same Genus, and do best in the same Bed: The *Vulvaria* itself, being indeed no other than a Female *Arbor Vitæ*.

It is produced in most Countries, tho' it Thrives in some more than others, where it also encreases to a larger Size; the Height here in *England* rarely passes Nine, or, at the most Eleven Inches, and that chiefly in *Kent*; whereas in *Ireland* it comes to far greater Dimensions, is so good, that many of the Natives entirely subsist upon it; and when transplanted, have been sometimes known to raise good Houses, with single Plants of this Sort.

As the *Irish* Soil is accounted the best, others are as remarkably bad for its Cultivation, and the least and worst in the World are said to be about *Harborough*, and the *Forrest of Sherwood*. The

The Stem seems to be of the *sensitive Tribe* tho' herein differing from the more common Sensitive, that whereas they are known to shrink and retire from even the gentlest Touch of a Lady's Hand, this rises on the contrary, and extends itself, when it is so handled.

In Winter it is not so easy to raise these Trees without a hot Bed, but in warmer Weather they stand well in the open Air.

In the latter Season they are subject to become weak and flaccid, and want Support; for which Purpose, some Gardeners have thought of splintering them up with *Birchin Twigs*, which has seem'd of some Service for the present, tho' the Plants have very soon come to the same, or a more drooping State than before.

The late ingenious Mr. *Motteux* thought of restoring a fine Plant, he had in this Condition, by tying it up with a *Tomex*, or Cord made of the Bark of the *Vitex*, or *Hempen-Tree*: But whether he made the Ligature too freight, or that the Nature of the *Vitex* is really in itself pernicious, he quite kill'd his Plant thereby; which makes this universally condemn'd as a dangerous Experiment.

Some *Virtuosi* have thought of improving their Trees for some Purposes, by taking off the *Nutmegs*, which is however a bad way; they never seed after, and are good for little more than making Whistles of, which are imported

imported every Year from *Italy*, and sell indeed at a good Price.

Some other curious Gentlemen have endeavour'd to inoculate their Plants on the Stock of the *Medlar*, and that with a Manure of *human Ordure*; but this has never been approv'd, and I have known some Trees brought to a *very ill End* by such Management.

The natural Soil is certainly the best for their Propagation, and that is in hollow Places, that are warm and near Salt Water, best known by their producing the same Sort of *Tendrils* as are observ'd about the Roots of the *Arbor* itself. Some Cautions, however, are very necessary, especially to young *Botanists*; and first, to be very diligent in keeping their Trees clean and neat, a pernicious Sort of Insect, not unlike a *Morpione* or *Cimex*, being very subject to breed amongst the *Fibrilla*, which, if not taken heed of, and timely destroy'd, proves often of very dangerous Consequence.

Another Caution, no less useful, we have from that excellent and judicious Botanist, Mr. *Humphry Bowen*, to beware of a poisonous Species of *Vulvaria*, too often mistaken for the wholesome one, and which, if suffer'd too near our Trees, will very greatly endanger their well-being. He tells us in the 12th Volume of his large Abridgment of *la Quintinye*, that before he had acquir'd his present Judgment and Experience, some of his Plants have often been Sufferers thro' this

this Mistake, and he has seen a tall thriving Tree, by the Contract only of this venomous Shrub, become *porose scabiose*, and cover'd with *fungous Excrescences* not unlike the Fruits of the *Ficus Sylvestris*; in which Case the *Succus* also has lost both its Colour and Vertue; and the Tree itself has so much partaken of the Nature of the venomous Shrub that had hurt it, that itself has become venomous, and spread the Poison throughout the whole Plantation.

These Distempers of a Tree of the greatest Use and Value, have employ'd the Labours of the most eminent *Botanists* and *Gardeners* to seek out Remedies for them; in which, however, none have succeeded like the celebrated Dr. *Misaubin* who from his profound Knowledge in *Botany*, has compos'd a most elaborate Work upon *all the Things that can happen*, both to the *Arbor Vita* and *Vulvaria* also: There he has taught a certain Cure for all these Evils, and, what is most wonderful, has even found out a Way of making the most venomous *Vulvaria* itself wholesome, which he practises daily to the Satisfaction of all that apply to him.

These venomous *Vulvaria*, are but too common in most Gardens about *London*; there are many in *St. James's Park*, and more in the celebrated Gardens at *Vaux-Hall* over the Water.

The Names and Virtues.

Besides the common Name of *Arbor Vita*, a very learned Philosopher and great Divine wou'd

wou'd have it call'd, *Arbor Scientiæ boni & mali*, believing, upon very good Grounds, this is the Tree which grew in the Middle of the Garden of *E* —, and whose Fruits were so alluring to our first Mother. Others would have it called the *Mandrake* of *Leah*, persuaded it is the same whose Juice made the before barren *Rachel*, a joyful Mother of Children.

The learned *Madam D'Acier* in her Notes upon *Homer*, contends it should be called *Nepenthes*,

She gives many Reasons why it certainly is that very Plant, whose Fruits the *Egyptian* Queen recommended to *Helen*, as a certain Cure for Pain and Grief of all Sorts, and which she ever after kept by her as her most precious Jewel, and made use of as a *Panacræa* upon all Occasions.

The great *Dr. Bentley* calls it more than once *Machæra Herculis*, having prov'd out of the Fragments of a *Greek* Poet, that of this Tree was made that Club, with which the Hero is said to have overcome the Fifty wild Daughters of *Thespius*, but which Queen *Omphale* afterwards reduced to a Distaff. Others have thought the celebrated *Hesperian* Trees were of this Sort; and the very Name of *Poma Veneris* frequently given by Authors to the Fruits of this Tree, is a sufficient Proof these were really the Apples, for which three Goddesses contended in so warm a Manner, and to which the Queen of Beauty had undoubtedly the strongest Title. The

The Virtues are so many, a large Volume might be wrote of them; the Juice taken inwardly cures the Green Sickness, and other Infirmities of the like Sort, and is a true Specifick in most Disorders of the Fair Sex: It indeed causes Tumours in the Umbilical Region; but even those being really of no ill Consequence, disperse of themselves in a few Months.

It chears the Heart, and exhilerates the Mind, quiets Jars, Feuds and Discontents, making the most churlish Tempers surprizingly kind and loving; nor have private Persons only been the better for this reconciling Virtue, but whole States and Kingdoms; nay, the greatest Empires in the World have often receiv'd the Benefit of it; the most destructive Wars have been ended, and the most friendly Treaties been produced, by a right Application of this universal Medicine, among the chief of the contending Parties.

If any Person is desirous to see this excellent and wonderful Plant, in good Perfection, may meet with it at the aforementioned Mr. *Bowen's* Garden, at *Lambeth*, who calls it the *Silver Spoon Tree*, and is at all Times ready to oblige his Friends with the Sight of it.



Aug. 805. b. 5.